

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 191036Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7963

INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T AMMAN 2678

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR--HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, US

SUBJECT: TALK WITH CROWN PRINCE -- JORDAN AIR DEFENSE

SUMMARY: CROWN PRINCE HASSAN SAYS THE SHAH REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT KING GOING TO SOVIETS FOR AIR DEFENSE. SHAH AND KING KHALID PLAN TO MEET MAY 28, ACCORDING TO HASSAN AND HASSAN EXPECTS SHAH WILL DISCUSS HAWK ARRANGEMENT WITH SAUDIS. HASSAN BELIEVES SOVIETS WILL BE FORTHCOMING WITH KING DURING PRESENT VISIT BUT THAT NO FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE UNTIL KING GOES TO MOSCOW IN JUNE AT WHICH TIME SOVIETS WILL PRESS HARD ON A DEAL WITH THE JORDANIANS. HASSAN HOPES FOR THEM ALONG THE LINES OF PERHAPS GETTING SAUDIS TO REVIEW THEIR PRESENT POSTURE TOWARD A SAUDI-FINANCED U.S. DEAL. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW CROWN PRINCE HASSAN EARLY MORNING MAY 19 FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM TEHRAN.

2. CROWN PRINCE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED KING'S INTENTIONS TO GO TO SOVIET UNION FOR AIR DEFENSE WITH SHAH. HE SAID HE TRIED TO EXPLAIN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH FORCED KING TO TURN TO SOVIET ALTERNATIVE -- LACK OF SECRET

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SAUDI FUNDING FOR A US SYSTEM. HASSAN SAID HE FOUND

SHAH WORRIED, BUT UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHETIC. HE SAID SHAH SEEMS CONCERNED ABOUT KING'S DRIFT AND IN KEEPING LINES OPEN TO KING.

3. HE REPORTS THAT SHAH WILL BE SEEING KING KHALID ON MAY 28 AND THAT HE EXPECTS, OR AT LEAST HE HOPES, THAT THEIR DISCUSSION MAY PROVIDE SOME FURTHER OPENING FOR A US DEAL.

4. HASSAN ALSO SEES MEETING IN SAUDI ARABIA BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA THIS WEEK AS ANOTHER HOPEFUL SIGN. HE THINKS SYRIANS SEE SOME ADVANTAGE IN JORDAN CONTINUING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH US OVER MILITARY SUPPLY ISSUES ALTHOUGH SYRIANS ARE NEUTRAL IN THEIR STATEMENTS TO JORDAN ABOUT JORDAN'S GOING TO SOVIET UNION. HIS HOPE IS THAT IF MEETING SUCCEEDS, SYRIANS CAN BE INFLUENTIAL WITH SAUDIS ON JORDAN'S BEHALF. ALTERNATIVELY, HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT IF MEETING FAILS, AS HE EXPECTS, MAYBE SAUDIS WILL BE DRIVEN TO REEXAMINE THEIR STAND.

5. COMMENT: THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF SHISTLING IN THE DARK ABOUT ALL OF THIS AND AS YOU KNOW HASSAN IS VERY MUCH AGAINST THE SOVIET DEAL AND VERY FAVORABLE TOWARD TRYING TO RESURRECT SOMETHING ON THE US ARRANGEMENT. UNFORTUNATELY HIS CONVERSATIONS TEND TO BE A LITTLE BIT ENIGMATIC AND ALLOW OTHERS TO CONCLUDE WHAT THEY PREFER TO CONCLUDE FROM WHAT HE HAS TO SAY, RATHER THAN PRECISELY WHAT HE HAS IN MIND. END COMMENT.

6. WE HAVE ALSO HEARD FROM ANOTHER RELIABLE SOURCE, AND EXPECT ALSO THAT THE INFORMATION HAS BEEN CONVEYED TO JORDANIANS, THAT BRITISH HAVE "IRON CLAD COMMITMENT" FROM THE SAUDIS OF 200 MILLION POUNDS STERLING (ROUGHLY WE ASSUME \$370 MILLION) ON RAPIER/THUNDERBIRD DEAL. THIS IS OF COURSE SOMETHING MORE THAN I GATHER WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND SAUDIS ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER FOR A US ARRANGEMENT. WHILE IT SEEMS JORDANIANS HAVE NOT BEEN ABSOLUTELY FRANK WITH THE BRITISH ON THEIR DISINCLINATION TO TAKE RAPIER/

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THUNDERBIRD DEAL, IT ALSO MAY GIVE KING SOME COMFORT IN DEALING WITH SOVIETS TO KNOW HE HAS ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE. HASSAN PUT GREAT STRESS ON KING'S DISCOMFORT IN DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS WITH NO FINANCING IN HAND AND SAID THAT REAL CRUNCH WILL COME WHEN KING GOES TO MOSCOW, AFTER WHICH HE BELIEVES THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER OPTION. BETWEEN NOW AND THEN HE SPECULATES ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE

MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

7. I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO REPEAT AGAIN FOR HASSAN
RANGE OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF KING'S GOING TO
SOVIETS. HE TOLD ME I WAS PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED.
PICKERING

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